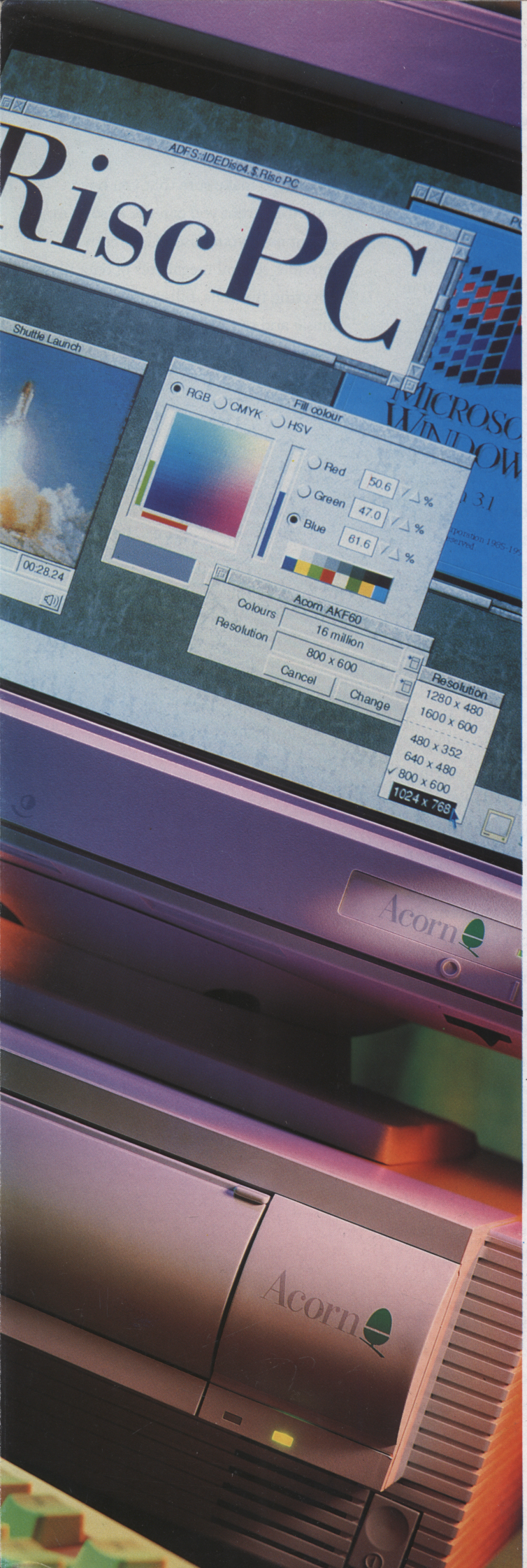

Data Sheet 18
RISC OS 3 Version 3.5

April 1994

RISC OS 3, the operating environment already appreciated by many thousands of users of Acorn 32 bit computers has been extended to take advantage of the many new features of the Risc PC. This is now RISC OS 3 version 3.5.

RISC OS 3 comprises the filing system, a multitasking WIMP (Windows, Icons, Menus and Pointers) based graphical user interface controlled by a three button mouse and a powerful suite of applications software, utilities and example files. The integral icon bar provides immediate access to all loaded applications, filing systems and printers, thus enabling users to control the system quickly and easily, while the context sensitive pop-up menus provided by RISC OS give consistency across applications.

RISC OS 3 version 3.5 provides a 3D desktop look and allows a high quality anti-aliased font of the user's choice to be used as the main system font, providing a most attractive working environment.

The consistent approach to both operating system operations (such as file handling) and the application software designed and produced by hundreds of software vendors means that users feel "at home" with new applications rapidly; this decreases learning time and increases productivity.

Graphic images can be handled and displayed in many different forms from black and white, through to the unfettered choice from over 16 million colours. Support for moving pictures is an integral part of the operating system, with Acorn Replay providing facilities not only for viewing "movies" in their own right, but also offering support to other applications

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that may wish to use full-motion video. You can use practically any type of monitor with your Risc PC, and to support this, RISC OS 3 has been extended to allow monitor definitions to be customised - and to provide an easy to use (and understand) method of selecting the resolution (up to 1600x1200 with a suitable monitor) and the number of colours available to suit you at whatever time - unlike some systems it is not necessary to save or restart should you wish to change screen resolutions. RISC OS can take advantage of VRAM (dedicated Video RAM) if it is fitted to your Risc PC, and like practically all hardware upgrades the detection of this is automatic - you do not need to adjust jumpers on the board for this to work.

RISC OS's unique font handling allows typeset quality anti-aliased text at infinitely variable size positioned at any angle on the screen.

Eighteen high quality typefaces are supplied with the Risc PC along with symbol fonts. New fonts may easily be added, and these then operate seamlessly with the others.

High quality screen images demand high quality printed output. Here RISC OS scores again with true WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get). It is supplied with drivers for 54 different printer types, from simple monochrome dot matrix through to colour PostScript on laser printers and phototypesetters. You can have several drivers loaded at one time - choosing between them when the time comes to print is as simple as a mouse click. And with the correct driver for your printer loaded, RISC OS can take full advantage of the resolutions that your printer can offer. The excellent font handling of RISC OS is not held back by the availability of fonts on your printer - RISC OS can automatically download font information to printers where it is required.

File handling under RISC OS is extremely simple. It doesn't matter whether files are stored on a local hard disc, a floppy disc, a CD ROM, a network or other device, the interface presented to the user is similar. To an application it makes no difference on what physical medium data is stored - it handles it in the same way. Copying files between filing systems is trivial - imagine just "picking up" an icon representing your information from a window representing one system, "dragging it and dropping it" to another. This logical approach is also used by applications, and with a common set of data formats, data from one application may simply be used directly by another - so there is no need for compromise in selecting applications.

Being in ROM, RISC OS takes much less user memory - and time to start up - than other operating systems and GUIs which typically load from hard disc. As well as this, the resources offered to applications by the operating system make it possible to have fully functional applications consuming very little user memory and mass storage (disc space) - a particular benefit when sharing applications in a network environment, or when using Compact Discs.

RISC OS's unified approach to file handling makes working with networks very simple with your Risc PC. By addition of the appropriate expansion card, peer to peer networking (hard disc sharing) industry standard TCP/IP and Acorn's own Acorn Universal Networking (AUN) become instantly available. These are all compatible as far as the application writer is concerned, and simple to use for the user and network manager alike.

RISC OS provides a high quality application suite including a text editor, icon editor, music editor and vector graphics program as well as providing applications to provide for image processing and conversion from other formats and a number of games and diversions.

Finally, to make sure that you have something that you can use as soon as you unpack your Risc PC, Acorn provides several megabytes of data files covering tutorials, full-motion video files, music and over 100 high quality still images stored in a compressed form.

Technical details

Display:

- 1-24 bit support with transparency control for video overlay
- User defined screen mode and monitor types - supplied modes from TV to1280x1024
- Anti-aliased outline font manager providing fully scalable fonts at any angle on screen or printer with support for kerning

Sound:

- 8 channel sound system with selectable sample rate
- Wavetable sound synthesis

Printing:

- Support for many types of printers including PostScript , PCL and dot matrix / bit image (others, such as fax for suitable modems available from third parties)

Peripheral support:

- Bidirectional fast parallel port
- Serial port (up to 115kBaud)
- Acorn 3-button mouse or serial PC compatible mouse
- DEBI expansion and compatible Archimedes podules

Memory management:

- ARM 600 family memory management support with 4K page size
- Applications provided protected independent memory starting at a consistent memory address
- Modular extensible operating system with module management for providing shared resources
- Applications can be decompressed at load time

Filing systems:

- ADFS (floppy disc and IDE hard disc - also providing support for reading MS-DOS discs)
- RAM filing system (user definable)
- Common filer approach for networks, CD, SCSI etc.
- Support for user-locking of hard disc

User interface:

- 3D look with anti-aliased typeface
- Consistent applications
- Co-operative multitasking
- Context dependent pop-up menus
- Icon bar providing immediate access to all loaded applications, filing systems, printers etc.

Supplied software suite including:

- Text editor
- Icon editor
- Vector graphics package
- Music package
- Many sample programs and datafiles

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